

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 and 37-40 are under consideration with claims 1, 21, 22, and 40 being independent. Claims 27-36 have been withdrawn. Claims 1, 21, 22, and 37-39 have been amended, and claim 40 has been added.

Independent claims 1, 21, and 22, and dependent claims 2-15, 23-26 and 37-39 have been rejected under §102(b) as being anticipated by Sekiguchi (U.S. Patent No. 5,848,134). This rejection has been obviated through amendments to claims 1, 21, and 22.

Claims 1, 21, and 22, as amended, recite a communications method that includes establishing a text instant messaging communication session between a sender and a recipient through an instant messaging host, enabling presentation of “a first text instant messaging graphical user interface to the recipient that includes an icon and a display of the text instant message, *the presentation of the first text instant messaging graphical user interface being conditioned on whether the text instant messaging communication session is established between the sender and the recipient*; and enabling manipulation by the recipient of the icon to invoke voice communication between the sender and the recipient through the instant messaging host” (emphasis added). Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 21, and 22, and their dependent claims, because Sekiguchi does not describe or suggest enabling presentation of a text instant messaging graphical user interface that includes an icon manipulable by a recipient to invoke voice communications with a sender and that is presented on the condition that a text instant messaging communication session is established between the sender and the recipient.

Sekiguchi describes a system that offers a chatting service and a real time electronic conference service that enables multiple users to communicate with each other. Sekiguchi's system includes a graphical user interface as shown in Figs. 5 and 6, that enables users to participate in real-time voice chat with other persons in an electronic conference room. Presentation of Sekiguchi's graphical user interface, however, is entirely independent of the existence (or lack thereof) of a text instant messaging session between users. Rather, the interface is presented to a user in response to that user selecting to enter the electronic conference

room. Accordingly, Sekiguchi does not describe or suggest enabling presentation of a text instant messaging graphical user interface to a recipient that includes an icon manipulable to invoke voice communications with a sender and that is presented conditionally based on whether a text instant messaging communication session is established between the sender and the recipient.

For at least these reasons, applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 21, and 22, and their dependent claims, claims 2-15, 23-26, and 37-39.

Dependent claims 16-20, which depend from independent claim 1, have been rejected under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Morris (WO 00/60809). Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 16-20 because, like Sekiguchi as described above, Morris does not describe or suggest enabling presentation of a text instant messaging graphical user interface that includes an icon manipulable by a recipient to invoke voice communications with a sender and that is presented conditionally based on whether a text instant messaging communication session is established between the sender and the recipient.

Morris describes a system for establishing an audio conference in a networked environment. Morris's system includes an audio communication application having a graphical user interface as shown in Fig. 8, that enables a user to participate in an audio conference with other users. Presentation of Morris's graphical user interface, however, is entirely independent of the existence of a text instant messaging session between users. Rather, the graphical user interface is presented to a user in response to that user engaging an icon corresponding to the audio communication application. Accordingly, Morris does not describe or suggest enabling presentation of a text instant messaging interface to a recipient that includes an icon manipulable to invoke voice communications with a sender and that is presented conditionally based on whether a text instant messaging communication session is established between the sender and the recipient.

For at least these reasons, applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of dependent claims 16-20.

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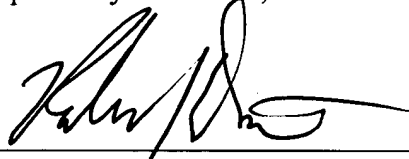
Applicants have added new independent claim 40. Claim 40 recites a communications method that includes establishing a text instant messaging communication session between a first user and a second user through an instant messaging host, "enabling presentation of a graphical user interface to the first user, *the presentation of the graphical user interface being conditioned on whether the text instant messaging communication session is established between the first user and the second user*" (emphasis added), and invoking voice communications between the first user and the second user through the instant messaging host in response to user manipulation of the graphical user interface. None of the cited art discloses enabling presentation of a graphical user interface manipulable by a first user to invoke voice communications with a second user and that is presented conditionally based on whether a text instant messaging communication session is established between the two users.

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Respectfully submitted,

Date: _____

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